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Who can get food stamps?

Many low-income households qualify. A household can mean:

- An individual living alone.
- An individual who buys food and prepares meals alone but who lives with others.
- A group of persons living together who usually buy and prepare their food together.
- An individual boarder or a group of boarders who pay a fair amount for the meals provided.

Who can't get food stamps?

Persons who do not qualify include:

- Boarders in a commercial boarding house.
- People in group care facilities.
- Certain students living away from home.
- Illegal aliens.

How can you apply for food stamps?

If you ask for a food stamp application, you will be given one the same day.

You can ask for an application by phone or by mail or someone else may get one for you.

The application can be returned to the local office at any time even if you can't be interviewed on that day.

Once you have the application, fill in your name, address, give as much other information as you can, and sign the application.

If you have an immediate need for food stamps, an interview will be conducted and a decision will be made on eligibility on that same day or the following working day. If your household is eligible, benefits will be authorized within two working days following the date the application was received in the local office.

If immediate need does not exist, you will be interviewed within 14 days after you apply.

You should bring proof of all income, paid bills, receipts of expenses, and records of shelter charges to the interview. Proof of assets such as savings and/or checking accounts is required.

What Is Income?

Your household's income is the total money you received from all sources. (See the supplementary card for details.)

Only households with net monthly income less than the limit allowed may qualify for food stamps. The limit goes up as the household size increases and may be adjusted in January and July if there are changes in the federal cost of living index.

Proof must be provided of the income of all household members. Examples of proof include--pay stubs, benefit letters from Social Security and the Veterans Administration.



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FOOD STAMPS

Food stamps can help you buy more food and buy better food.

You can spend food stamps like cash for food at most food stores, at certain group dining facilities, and for Meals-on-Wheels.

If you qualify, you will receive food stamps at no cost each month you are certified eligible.

Instead of using your money to buy food stamps, you should spend it along with your stamps directly for food at the grocery store.



What are resources?

Resources include cash, bank accounts, stocks, and property. Resources such as your home, personal belongings, household goods, life insurance policies and certain pension funds are not counted. Licensed vehicles are handled individually depending on how they are used. Other non-exempt resources will be counted at their fair market value less money still owed on them.

Each household can have up to \$1,750 in resources and still qualify for food stamps. Households with two or more people can have up to \$3,000 if one person is 60 or over.



What are your rights?

You have the right to:

- Receive an application the same day you ask for it.
- Have your signed application accepted immediately.
- Have an adult who knows your circumstances apply for you if you cannot get to the food stamp office yourself.
- Have a home visit or telephone interview if you are 65 or older or are disabled and cannot get to the food stamp office or find someone to go for you.

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- Have your signed application accepted immediately.
- Have an adult who knows your circumstances apply for you if you cannot get to the food stamp office yourself.
- Have a home visit or telephone interview if you are 65 or older or are disabled and cannot get to the food stamp office or find someone to go for you.
- Get your food stamps within 30 days after you apply, if you are eligible.
- Get food stamps within a few days if you are in immediate need and are eligible to qualify for faster service.
- Be notified in advance before your food stamps are reduced or terminated. If you appeal within 10 days, your food stamps will be continued.

- Examine your own case file and obtain a copy of the food stamp program rules.
- Ask for a fair hearing in writing, in person, or over the phone.
- Have a fair hearing if you disagree with any action taken on your case.
- Have the food stamp office give you any additional information about the hearing rules.
- Ask anyone you wish to help you prepare for the hearing and to attend it with you.
- Receive fair treatment regardless of age,

Are there other requirements?

Citizenship: U.S. citizens and certain legal aliens may qualify. If members of your household are not U.S. citizens you will have to provide proof of their status from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Work Registration: With some exceptions, all unemployed able-bodied household members 18 through 59 years of age must sign up for work, look for a job, and accept a suitable job offer.

How many food stamps can you get?

Food Stamp adjustments may be made every January and July to show rising food prices.

For details, look at the up-to-date supplementary card.

sex, race, color, handicap, religion, national origin, or political beliefs.

- File a written complaint within 180 days with either USDA (Secretary, FNS, Washington, D.C. 20250) or your IDPA office or both.
- Receive help in filing your complaint from your IDPA office:

Your complaint should include the name and address of the office which is accused of the unfair practice and the reason and nature of the allegedly unfair practice.

Your responsibilities?

When you apply for food stamps, answer all questions completely and honestly.

Provide proof that you are eligible.

Promptly report any changes in your household (such as number of persons, income, and/or deductions) to the food stamp office by calling or filling in a special form which will be given to you at the time you are found eligible.

If you do not report a change and get extra food stamps, you may be requested to make a

cash payment for the value of these stamps.

Do not put your money or possessions in someone else's name in order to qualify for food stamps.

Do not make changes on any food stamp cards or documents.

Use food stamps only to buy the food that is allowed.

People who break food stamp rules may be disqualified from the program, fined, imprisoned, or all three.

How to buy with food stamps

You may name someone as a "proxy" to get your food stamps and to get food for you with your stamps.

If necessary, food stamps may be obtained by mail by sending your signed ATP card to Mail Order Sales Office, Post Office Box 939, Springfield, Ill. 62705.

When you spend your food stamps, you

will get a \$1 food stamp coupon back for every \$1 in change due. For amounts of 99¢ or less, you will receive cash change.

Food stamps can only be used to pay for food and for plants and seeds to grow food that your household can eat.

Items such as alcohol, tobacco, pet foods, soap, paper goods, and supplies may not be bought with food stamps. Food stamps are not to be used to purchase hot, ready to eat foods sold in retail food stores. Old food bills cannot be settled with food stamps.

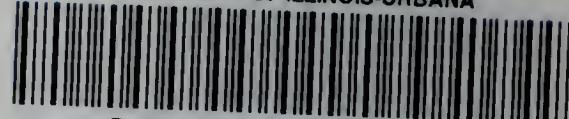
There is no sales tax on items purchased with food stamps.

U.S.D.A. pays half of all administrative costs of the Food Stamp Program and provides the coupons. The Illinois Department of Public Aid administers the program.



**YOU CAN GET AN APPLICATION BY
CALLING OR GOING TO:**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



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Local Office Stamp

**OR YOU CAN ALSO GET AN APPLICATION
BY CALLING THE FOOD STAMP HOTLINE,
800-972-4608.**

Illinois Department of Public Aid
316 S. Second Street
Springfield, Ill. 62702



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